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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000222

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [QA](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: BASHIR DEFIES ICC, ATTENDS ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT IN
DOHA; 15 HEADS OF STATE ATTEND

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

(C) KEY POINTS

-- Sudan's President Bashir is attending the Arab League Summit in Doha, his first international meeting since the March 4 arrest warrant was issued against him under an ICC indictment.

-- The Amir greeted him at the airport, as he did other visiting heads of state. The Amir also warned in a press interview that the ICC warrant could have a destabilizing effect on Sudan and the African region.

-- As testimony to the continuing frigid relations between Qatar and Egypt, President Mubarak did not attend and Cairo did not send even its Foreign Minister to Doha. Representing Egypt is the Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

-- Seventeen heads of state or government, including the host, attended the opening ceremony; four countries were represented at a lower level; coup leader Ould Abdul Aziz represented Mauritania. No Iranian officials attended. HAMAS's Khalid Mish'al was not invited.

(C) COMMENTS

-- The next test of Qatar's diplomacy with Sudan will be whether President Bashir stays on past the current Arab League Summit to participate in the one-day March 31 Arab-South American Summit. MFA sources told us that some South American countries vowed not to attend the meeting if Bashir is present.

-- Morocco and Egypt sent representatives, but not their heads of state, a sign that tensions within the Arab League remain. The Sultan of Oman, as is his usual practice, did not attend but sent a representative.

-- Also according to press reports, Presidents Mubarak and Bouteflika will hold their own bilateral Egyptian-Algerian Summit in Algiers starting April 2 -- further evidence of the strains within the Arab League.

End Key Points and Comments.

11. (U) Defying an International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment against him, Sudan's President Bashir arrived in Doha the evening of March 29 to attend the Arab League Summit. Since the ICC issued the arrest warrant against him on March 4, Arab countries have voiced general support for Bashir, and he has visited Eritrea, Egypt, Libya and now Qatar in defiance of the ICC. This is Bashir's first appearance at an international meeting since the announcement of the indictment. International attention on his attendance

is heightened by the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, here as a Summit observer.

¶2. (U) The GOQ extended an invitation to Bashir, as it did to all Arab League heads of state, to attend the Summit in Doha.

Despite international pressures against receiving Bashir, Qatar's Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani made it clear publicly that Qatar was obligated to invite all heads of state. The Amir, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, in an interview appearing in the German daily Der Spiegel March 30, warned that the ICC arrest warrant, if not officially frozen by the ICC, would have a destabilizing effect on Sudan and the wider region in Africa. Al-Qaida, said the Amir, would be "happy to see Sudan become like Iraq."

¶3. (C) Based on Ambassador's conversations with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed Al-Mahmoud, who holds the Darfur mediation portfolio for Qatar, exchanges with Sudan over its representation at the Summit out of the public view have been at times heated. The Sudanese proposed moving the Summit from Doha to Khartoum to show Arab support for Bashir -- a proposal that Qatar, as the rotating host, rejected. Taking place March 31 immediately following the Arab League Summit is an Arab League-South America Summit (which Qatar agreed to host after Morocco bowed out). MFA officials have told us that South American countries are reluctant to participate in the latter Summit if Bashir is also present. Hence, the GOQ has long been mindful of the thorny issues, both international and practical, surrounding Bashir's presence.

¶4. (U) Chairman of the Commission of the African Union Jean

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Ping, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, and Speaker of the Arab Parliament Jassem Al Saqr all had speaking roles in the March 30 opening ceremony.

ATTENDANCE AT THE SUMMIT

¶5. (U) Summit Host:

Qatari Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

¶6. (U) Heads of state and government from Arab League states:

Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
Comoran President Ahmed Abdullah Mohammed Sambi
Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh
Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki
Jordanian King Abdullah II
Kuwaiti Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al-Sabah
Lebanese President Michel Sleiman
Libyan President Muammar Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi
Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas
Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz
Somalian President Shiekh Cherif Sheikh Ahmed
Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir
Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad
Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayan
Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh

¶7. (U) Heads of delegation other than heads of state:

Egyptian Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Mufid Shihab
Moroccan Prince Moulay Rashid, brother of the King
Omani Deputy Prime Minister for Cabinet Affairs Fahad bin Mahmoud Al Saeed

¶8. (U) Coup leader receiving treatment as head of state:

Mauritanian General Mahamed Ould Abd Aziz

19. (U) Prominent invited observers in attendance:

African Union Commission President Jean Ping
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa General
Director Abdulaziz Khlaf
Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa
Arab Parliament President Mohammed Jassin Al Sager
European Commission Ambassador Klaus Ebermann
European Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process Marc Otte
Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdelrahman bin
Hamad Al Attiyah
Japanese Special Envoy to the Middle East Tatsuo Arima
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Director Nicola Bonucci
Organization of the Islamic Conference Secretary General
Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
UNRWA General Commissioner Karen Coning Abu Zeid
United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
LeBaron